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# Religion in the Common Schools.

## THREE LECTURES

DELIVERED IN THE CITY OF CINCINNATI, IN  
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BY  
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## Religion in the Common School.

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For the last month the Board of Education in Cincinnati has been agitated by two questions, on whose decision the very existence of our present system of free public education depends.

First, a proposition was made to the Board by the Catholic Archbishop Purcell for a conference respecting the conditions on which the Catholic schools of this city should be united with the public schools. The Board, with great courtesy, appointed a committee, every member of which was understood to be favorable to a union if it could be achieved without sacrifice of the fundamental principles of the American system of free schools. A conference was held, and the Archbishop virtually proposed that the city of Cincinnati should support Catholic religious schools with the public money. As this proposition was in direct hostility both to the fundamental idea of the American free school system, and the Constitution of the State of Ohio, both of which forbid the support of sectarian religious schools by the taxation of the whole people, it was unanimously rejected—not one member of the Board uttering a word in its favor. The Archbishop suggested that the Committee of Conference should remain in session until he was able to consult Pope Pius IX upon the whole subject; and several of the members of the Board, including the President, voted in favor of waiting for consultation with a prince, politically the most insignificant in Europe, the only prince in the world who recognized our late rebel confederacy, in regard to the education of the citizens of the Republic of the United States. This astounding proposition was buried under an overwhelming majority, and there is no probability that the question of the union of Catholics and public schools will again come before the present Board. Next spring, twenty of the forty seats in that body become vacant, and the people can determine whether they shall be filled by men who favor the surrender of the great vital principle of American public education to the demands of any religious sect.

But now comes up another question, equally momentous, alike involving a fundamental change in our system of public instruction.

The Constitution of Ohio declares that the public school moneys shall not be used in support of any religious or other sect. The proposition now is to banish religion itself from all the public schools of Cincinnati; a proceeding which would deliver up our magnificent system of instruction to the smallest, least influential and most intolerant of all sects, the sect of atheists; "the other sect" which denies the existence of God, the spiritual nature of man, the union of religion and morality and the immortality of the soul. It proposes virtually to place the million dollars, now raised for the education of the people in this city, and the fifty thousand school-children of Cincinnati, in the hands of a sect which denies every great religious belief that has prevailed since the creation of the world.

This is a proposition narrower and more intolerant than that of the Archbishop, inasmuch as it favors a sect of far less importance, and cuts up public religion itself by the roots. It is equally obnoxious to the Constitution of Ohio, and should it prevail, would be the instantaneous destruction of our public schools. The former proposition came from without, and was unanimously rejected. The latter was offered by Mr. S. A. Miller, a new representative from the seventeenth ward, who informed the Board that twenty-six members were pledged to its adoption. Twenty-one members are required to pass it, and as there has yet been no real discussion on the merits of the question, this boast was doubtless premature. The resolution lies upon the table, a slumbering monster, ready to sleep the sleep of death, or start into tremendous life, according to the will of its mover.

Understand me. I do not charge that any member of the Board of Education is an atheist. On the broad field of public affairs, I bandy theological epithets with no man. I do not charge on the mover of these resolutions, or any gentleman who will vote for them, the premeditated design of either destroying our public schools or delivering them into the hands of any sect whatever. I impugn the motives of none of my colleagues. I only look on the face of these resolutions, so carefully drawn, so deep and comprehensive in their scope, supported by men whose boast is their admiration of strict logic, and I declare my conviction that, if adopted, they will make the public schools of Cincinnati, schools of atheism, and place the whole education of the people's children in the hands of that "other sect," whose one point of theology is the denial of the possibility of religion for any human soul. The following are the resolutions:

*Resolved*, That religious instruction and the reading of religious books, including the Holy Bible, are prohibited in the common schools of Cincinnati, it being the true object and intent of this rule to allow the children of the parents of all sects and opinions

in matters of faith and worship, to enjoy alike the benefit of the common school fund.

“*Resolved*, That so much of the Regulations on the Course of Study and Text Books, in the Intermediate and District Schools (page 213, Annual Report) as reads as follows: ‘The opening exercises, in every department, shall commence by reading a portion of the Bible, by or under the direction of the teacher, and appropriate singing by the pupils,’ be repealed.”

The gist of the whole matter is found in the first two lines: “That religious instruction and the reading of religious books are prohibited in the common schools.” This goes to the bottom of the whole matter, and sets not only the Bible and religious music, but religion itself, adrift down stream, leaving the schools utterly expurgated of every thing to which any materialistic atheist could object. The public conscience has been aroused, as by a thunder-clap, at the suggestion that the Bible must be removed from the public schools. Even that genial optimist, the Cincinnati Commercial, is grieved that Old Hundred can no longer be sung to soothe the rampant passions of naughty boys and wrathful pedagogues. But these are subordinate considerations. Were it proposed so to read the Bible that only those passages which most simply and concisely express the religious faith of mankind should be read, omitting all outside and above the average comprehension of little children, especially those portions on whose interpretation the greatest of Biblical scholars are divided, that would be a different question.

Were it proposed to expurgate our music books of all sectarian hymns and songs, if such there be, or to inquire if any teacher is going outside the common platform of religion in the matter of instruction, that would be another question. If abuses of this kind exist, there is a remedy at hand, amply provided for under the present school regulations. But the friends of this resolution have charged no such abuses and invited no such investigation. In their eyes, the sovereign offense is that religion in any form is brought in contact with the public schools. For this disease, they propose the heroic treatment of the destruction of religion itself in every school-house in the city. Almost every religious sect in the United States has been guilty of persecuting its rival sects, in behalf of its own religion; but I apprehend this is the first time in America when a persecution and prohibition of religion itself has been organized in the very heart of the commonwealth, the republic of the little children.

Let us trace the practical effect of this prohibition in the public schools in Cincinnati.

*First.* The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are wholly excluded

and no verse therefrom can be read or quoted inside the public schools.

*Second.* All religious music, including, of course, most of the highest music in the world, which is religious, is turned out, and the children are left to find such comfort as they may in harmony divorced from all the higher sentiments of man.

*Third.* All literature, ancient and modern, which refers to or recognizes religion, must be put out from the public schools. Thus, by one atheistic "bull" an interdict is placed over all the highest literature of the world. Homer, and Plato, and Virgil, Milton and Shakspeare, and Humboldt and Goethe, and all the highest English and American literature goes, and the scholars are left to read and digest only works of pure science, mathematics, such philosophy and history as repudiate religion, and such poets as the Roman Lucretius, the German Heinzen and the American Walt. Whitman.

*Fourth.* All religious art is banished by the same blow. Not one of the master-pieces of religious art, which we cross the ocean to behold, could be hung upon the walls of the public school-room.

*Fifth.* Our whole series of American school-books, excepting, perhaps, the mathematical books, must be swept out as so much waste paper. The school-readers now in use contain not only the choicest passages from the Bible, but also many of the noblest selections from the best authors of the English and German tongue which inculcate religion. We banish, with these books, the sweetest poems of our own Longfellow, and Bryant, and Sprague, of Mrs. Hemans and Wordsworth, the grand soliloquy of Cato on Immortality by Addison, the glorious strains of Milton, the Farewell Address of Washington. Every series of school readers in American use recognizes and inculcates religion. They must all go. Everything in history that touches upon the religious progress of the race must go. If the geography, or the book of science, declares the world was made by God, that, too, must go, and a committee must be appointed to prepare a series of school books worthy to be read by children who have no souls—who recognize no Father in heaven.

*Sixth.* Every little boy that declaims on the school platform, must be watched lest he should declaim in favor of religion. If, in fond imitation of us in our youthful days, he starts off with the resounding lines :

"The spacious firmament on high,  
And all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim,"

the Principal shouts: "Stop, boy; the great Original is an unconstitutional and unknown quantity in the schools of Cincinnati." A little girl, brooding over her first composition, may tell the story of her loves for pussy and canary; but if, fresh from the bereavement at home, she writes: "Our little baby died yesterday, and God has taken it to heaven to be an angel forever," blotting the paper with her tears, her little essay goes into the waste-basket; for within these walls there is no God, there are no angels, there is no forever in heaven.

*Seventh.* All instruction, or exhortation, or conversation by the teachers, enforcing the religious duty of love to God and love to man, must come to an end, and nothing must be said which will provoke the objection of any man who believes that the common moralities of life have no deeper root than the varying custom of the hour.

*Eighth.* The new Public Library is established and will be supported by the money of the whole people, and will be an educator of our youth not inferior to the public schools. Do these gentlemen propose to carry their logic inside those spacious alcoves, and make it solely a collection of the atheistic writings of the world?

But this is only the superficial result of this proposition. After all, the children in our public schools are educated by the manhood and womanhood of their teachers more than all their studies. Do these educational reformers suppose that our present teachers, who believe in religion—many of them eminent for the elevation of their religious character—will submit to this revival of religious persecution? What noble, God-fearing man, what tender Christian or Hebrew woman, will stand there to be worried, and watched and pestered by a little sect that repudiates all that makes man and woman divine? And when they shake the dust from their feet and leave those godless halls, and their places are filled by men who scorn the imputation of a spiritual nature, and women—oh! save us from that—who have cut adrift from the eternal verities of life, do these reformers suppose the people will pay a million dollars a year to perpetuate this new philosophic Utopia, or hand over their fifty thousand children to be experimented with and educated on the theory that they are only thinking animals!

If it be probable that the bodies of men are shaped and toned by the physical region in which they live, so is it a thousand times more probable that the souls of children are exalted and expanded, or depressed and narrowed by the spiritual climate and style of character with which they are brought in contact. They now grow up in the genial and enlivening atmosphere of religious faith, and hope, and trust; are we ready to banish them to the bleak and wintry realm of a life without a future, and a universe without a God?

For religion is no sect, no book, no interloper in human affairs.

Religion is older than Protestant or Catholic, than Christian or Hebrew, than Mohammedan or Pagan faith. The Bible and all special forms and creeds are but its children.

If there is one thing that is universal, one sentiment that makes men human, one influence that is cosmopolitan, one golden chain which, clasped by Adam's hand and felt after by the trembling fingers of the last new-born child, binds all created men in one family, unites nations and races and ages in a sublime brotherhood, and passing upward is lost in the mysterious universe peopled by myriads of created intelligences and pervaded by the spirit of infinite love, that golden chain is Religion. No nation ever existed that was not founded upon it; no human institutions that have repudiated the worship of God and the religious and moral duties of man, have been able to stand upright in this world. All the occupations of human life are organized around the universal religious faith of man. The family, the school, the whole machinery of human government, no less than the church, are built upon this universal faith. Whether expressed or understood, religion is present, visible like the light or invisible like the air, the element which binds all together and makes life itself a blessing.

There has always been in the world a class of people who have denied the possibility of religion in their philosophical theories, though compelled to recognize it in every act of their lives. A gracious providence for a brief hour committed the destinies of one nation to their charge, and they ruled it long enough to make that one chapter in the history of France the "bloodiest record on the book of time." That sect exists to-day in the United States, organized and engineered by men who have thought themselves out of the world of divine realities into a universe of philosophical negations.

Its chief strength is in the new cities of the West, those strange accumulations of humanity, where every phase of human folly and madness, every conflict between good and evil that has vexed mankind in the past, is to be confronted anew. We meet it at every step. It challenges every idea and institution especially dear to the American heart. It proposes nothing less than to empty American public and private life of everything that has been held divine and eternal by the human race; to blot out the spiritual firmament above; to pull down the mountain ranges of aspiration, and fill up the oceans of deep and fathomless trust, and change life to a level plain of materialistic existence. By playing upon the political and social ambitions of the people, it has acquired a temporary and factitious power.

And now, emboldened by past success, it stalks into that sacred realm of American society, the people's common school, demanding that all recognition of religion shall be expelled therefrom. It

is prepared to unite with the bitterest enemy of public education to achieve its purpose. It boasts that "it is ready to fight this battle through to the bitter end." Well, so let it be. For one, I am fully prepared for the issue, and have not a moment's doubt which side to take. Let us put by all compromises, "lay aside every weight," and stand up square to the fight. Shall religion be banished from the public schools of the United States? I will work with men of all religions and of no religion, asking no questions, making no comparisons, in the glorious common cause of American civilization. I will not even ask what is the religion of my colleagues in the Board of Education so long as we toil together as brethren to build up that beautiful system of instruction, which, repudiating alike sectarianism and atheism, abides on the high plateau of the religious obligation of all mankind.

But the moment either archbishop or atheist demands the surrender of that citadel of American liberty, that stronghold of the human race, the right to apply religion everywhere in public and private life, I can no longer vote with that man though he were the son of my own mother and the dearest friend of my life; and I warn the people of this city and this State that the moment when they begin to yield either to the threats or the blandishments of a religious or an atheistic sect, though the one may appear clad with all the sacred associations and awful sanctions of the infallible church of the living God, or the other may boast itself as the infallible leader of the only science and culture of the age, that moment the great system of the public education of the American people, built up by the toil and treasure of our fathers, sanctified by the prayers and watered by the tears of generations of parents, cherished in the grateful memory of succeeding generations of their children, the guardian of our liberties and the hope of our republic, will begin to dissolve, and every step that way is a step toward its destruction.

What are the potent reasons for this expulsion of religion from the common schools of Cincinnati? It is whispered about that if we will put religion out, many parents who believe in the Catholic faith will put their children in. But if there is anything fixed in the Catholic church, it is that religion and education must go hand in hand. The Catholic church all over the world, through its infallible authorities, is engaged in drawing Catholic youth into schools exclusively controlled by itself, on the very ground that in all other institutions of learning, religious instruction is neglected. We are now gravely told that the one condition of bringing Catholic youth into our public schools, is to make the schools atheistic! When the Catholic clergy and laity of Cincinnati will appear before the Board of Education, and declare that if religion is expelled they

will come in and abide with us, it will be time to give this argument a serious and prayerful consideration.

But the grand argument for this "reform" is a legal argument. The Board of Education, in days past, has not been wanting in respectable lights of the law. A Storer, a King, a Fisher, have presided over its deliberations with consummate dignity and knowledge. Other well-known eminent lawyers have graced those seats, and have not been unwilling to instruct their colleagues in the mysteries of the law. The legal brigade of the board has not been so feeble, either in numbers or in commanding reputation for years; perhaps never has there been so little commanding legal talent in that body as at present. It is somewhat significant that as the great lawyers go out, this new legal crusade against religion comes in. The great men, whose legal nod was enough to quiet our parliamentary strifes, were so blind that they never discovered that we were supporting an illegal institution in the public schools. Now comes the new day of illumination, in which it is suddenly and triumphantly announced that not only in the common school, but through the whole length and breadth of American public affairs, religion is unconstitutional.

It is also a little remarkable that this announcement so far is bottomed solely upon the decision of Judge Thurman and the Supreme Court of the State, which decision, it is asserted, is to the effect that to the Constitution of Ohio religion is unknown; that the State and all our public institutions are secular in the sense that they are atheistic. For atheism itself is only the denial of God, and the State that through all its public policy utterly ignores religion is an atheistic State. Now, I do not propose to intrude upon the province of the law, or presume to crowd upon the path so ably trod by the eloquent and learned orators of last Tuesday evening. But, as a citizen of Ohio and the United States, certainly not indifferent to religion by my calling in life, I would say a word on the general bearings of this astounding assertion.

Even were there such a decision as is claimed, we must remember that in the American republic all official power is delegated, and not even a supreme court is infallible authority. Especially on such mighty themes as liberty and religion, which are the foundations of civilization itself, there is no infallible authority outside the final, solemn, deliberate judgment of the people; and even that decision only holds until, by appeal to the God of truth and justice, the hearts of the people themselves may be changed and an unrighteous judgment reversed. Plato says: "Atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the understanding;" and certainly the people of Ohio have never delegated to any body of lawyers the infallible authority to expel Almighty God from the State. It would be strange, indeed, if they should deny to the



church the infallible power to establish a sect of religion and confer upon the courts the infallible power to declare the State of Ohio an atheistic political corporation. We have not forgotten that ten years ago a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States denied the right of American citizenship to one-eighth of the American people, and declared the Constitution of the United States the great propagandist of human slavery, suggesting that black men had no rights that white men are bound to respect. The people of the United States found that decision, with a good deal of unwholesome rubbish of the same sort, among the rebel effects at Appomattox Court-house, and it now sleeps in the same museum as the Confederate bonds, the captured robes of the rebel president, and the C. S. A.

They reconstructed their Supreme Court, and presented every judge with a new pair of spectacles, whereby he could behold liberty interlined through all the history and the fundamental law of the nation, and, lest those glasses should become dim, they have been engaged for the last five years in writing human freedom all over the Constitution in letters so large and brilliant that even the wayfaring man, though a fool, might read their sovereign will aright. It now appears that the courts of Ohio are called upon to make the more amazing decision that this glorious State, as a government, repudiates religion. Had any court thus decided, it might be prudent, in view of past events, to wait two years, when the people of Ohio will reconstruct their constitution, and obtain their final judgment, before the School Board embarks on the extensive operation of reading Almighty God out of the common schools.

But we are comforted by the assurance of our most eminent lawyers, that this decision referred to has no such meaning as is forced upon it; that it is simply a strong rhetorical statement of the well-known principle that the State of Ohio does not punish crimes and offenses because they are contrary to the Christian or any other form of religion; that in view of the strife between religious parties and sects, and the interminable conflict of ecclesiastical powers, the State has taken up all of religion and morality necessary for the public guidance of the people, in the form of statute and common law, which it administers on its own authority. The State is secular at every point where any form of religion comes in, and claims the right to administer justice by its own ecclesiastical or religious authority. And that is just as it should be. We can not guard too strictly against the encroachments of ecclesiastical power, and while we confess that the authority of God and His law is always binding upon the conscience and the life of every citizen, we empower the State to organize the grand eternal verities of justice, humanity, and religion, into a political constitution and government, and administer it on human authority,

appealing, in the words of our martyr president, "to the deliberate judgment of posterity and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

What I assert is this: That the people of Ohio, like the people of every State that ever existed on earth, have recognized, and do recognize, the fact that religion and morality, the obligation to worship God and do good to man, are the very foundation of human society itself, the basement structure of their whole form of government, the sanction of all their laws, and the final judge of all their public policy. They have never been so mad as to assert that justice, freedom, humanity, religion, can be made or unmade at Columbus, Ohio. These are eternal. They existed when Ohio was a pathless forest; by virtue of them alone is Ohio the commonwealth she is; they will abide when historians will divide on the question, if the existence of Ohio is not an unstable myth of the past.

According to our frail and wavering, through growing wisdom, we have organized as much as we can comprehend and apply of those majestic realities into the government and institutions of our beloved State, administering that government, as we act in all human affairs, by the authority we hold as children of the Father in heaven. As the years roll on, we hope to make our institutions conform more and more to the spirit of these eternal laws of life, for all human government is at last but "the re-enactment of the law of God;" and surely it is a sight that may well arouse our pity or provoke our indignation, when men, clad in the dignity of official position, bound by solemn oath to God to administer public affairs, lift up their voices and proclaim the expulsion of God and religion from the State.

We learn that such men are surprised at the excitement in this community; at the deep apprehension which runs through the homes, the churches, and the schools; that arouses our too sluggish population to such demonstrations as we have witnessed; and hints are darkly given that such people as flood the Board of Education with petitions, and crowd the Music Hall, and hold counsel with each other everywhere, are the instigators of mob law and personal violence! We beg them to calm their apprehensions. Religion is not so near its end in Cincinnati yet, that it must fly to carnal weapons in self-defense. Religion is not on the defensive at all in this matter.

In a time of profound tranquility, while the people are rejoicing with pride in their common schools, paying a million dollars a year for their support, and crowding our school-houses with their children, they are suddenly appalled by the fear that a Catholic and an Atheistic sect have struck hands to divide, distract, and wholly change that great institution. They have risen and expressed their will; the common schools of Cincinnati shall not be

Catholic, and they shall not be atheistic; and now they calmly wait to see what servants of theirs are sufficiently courageous to defy their will.

The State of Ohio has declared, in the same unmistakable language, through her whole history, the same momentous fact; the State is not sectarian, the State is not atheistic, the State is founded upon and everywhere acknowledges the eternal and binding force of religion. Were it not so, Ohio would be the one solitary exception to every commonwealth of ancient or modern times. Nobody denies that every state that existed before the American Republic was not only founded on religion, but supported some form of religion by law. No man acquainted with the history of the thirteen American colonies will deny that in every one of them religion was not only acknowledged and legally protected, but at some time a special form of religion was established.

Anybody who can read knows that the men who issued our Declaration of Independence declared that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men." They appeal to the "Supreme Judge of the world," and "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, they mutually pledge to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." The Continental Congress recognized the binding force of religion by electing chaplains, attending divine service in a body, purchasing and circulating the Bible and causing to be published the first edition of the Scriptures printed with American types, and enforcing religion in repeated resolutions and addresses.

Standing on this rock of ages, Washington drew his sword as commander-in-chief of the patriot armies. His first order at Cambridge was a recognition of God and a command for divine worship. In every colony during the Revolutionary war, religion was thus acknowledged. For our fathers had not arrived at that height of wisdom that they would essay to build a new nation without the help of Almighty God.

The articles of confederation "implore the Great Governor of the world to incline the hearts of the legislatures we respectively represent in Congress to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify the said articles of confederation and perpetual union."

In the convention that formed our Constitution and created the Republic, Benjamin Franklin brought its quarrelsome delegates to their senses by moving the appointment of a chaplain in a speech that every American school-boy should learn by heart; just as in 1852, the House of Representatives at Washington paused in the strife of its election of speaker, and solemnly resolved, in view of

the dangers besetting them, that every morning session should be opened with prayer. The Constitution of the United States is no atheistic document. It wisely leaves all legislation respecting the establishment of religion to the several States, and guarantees to the people the free exercise of religion itself, placing it alongside the sacred rights of freedom of speech and the press and the right of petition.

It recognizes the memorable year of its own creation as "the year of our Lord." It imposes the solemnity of an oath upon every official of the Government. Washington declared that the new constitution was religious. When inaugurated as first president, he kissed the Bible as he swore the oath, saying aloud, "so help me God;" then walked with the whole assembly to church, where prayers were read; and then, in his inaugural address, said: "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States;" and his Farewell Address contains a solemn adjuration to the people to "abide by religion and morality as the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."

Chief Justice Story, of the Supreme Court of the United States, in his Commentaries on the Constitution, declares that: "The attempt at the time of its formation to make it a matter of State policy to hold all religions in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation."

Under a constitution and government thus consecrated by the acknowledgment of religion as the supreme law of human life, our national legislation has perpetually recognized this beneficent power. The first Congress, in the ordinance of 1787, to which the State of Ohio owes her existence, says: "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be encouraged;" that every man shall be protected in the enjoyment of religious liberty, and there shall be no slavery in the great North-west. And on those conditions, for the support of an education based on religion and morality, the public lands were given, from which a portion of the school fund of Ohio is derived.

Congress has always appointed congressional chaplains, and opened its halls for frequent religious services on Sunday. It appoints chaplains for the army, and makes post-chaplains school-masters, and by the law of 1861, selects them entirely from Christian ministers. Every one of the thousand glorious regiments that drove the slave power into the sea bore the flag and the Bible, and the minister of God shared in all its toils and dangers. The captain of every ship of war is compelled to hold divine service and exhort his men to attend. The military and the naval schools and the government hospitals are provided with religious instruction. A movement, in

1853, in Congress, to abolish the office of chaplain on the ground of unconstitutionality, was rejected with overwhelming unanimity. Washington appointed Thanksgiving Day, and Lincoln, in the perilous times of war, summoned the people to fast and rejoice. The Government of the United States has always acknowledged the authority of religion in all ways that would not trench upon the boundary lines of ecclesiastical and sectarian influence. It is neither ecclesiastical nor sectarian, nor atheistic, but it is religious.

As if to confirm the signal wisdom of the fathers of the American republic, the people of France were left to found their new commonwealth on the blasphemous denial of God and the contempt of religion. The blazing fires which consumed that short-lived structure shed a lurid light over the new American states. It was amid the fires of that European conflagration that their old constitutions were remodeled and new ones created. The atheism that held that torch was not without disciples among ourselves, while bigots of every sect clamored at the doors of the conventions for power. But the people, with that common sense which has been the guardian genius of America, struck the key-note of civil and religious liberty in every commonwealth;—the State is not sectarian; the State is not atheistic; the State is religious;—and no State more decisively than Ohio has affirmed that mighty idea. The first words of the Constitution of Ohio—the corner-stone of her temple of liberty—are these solemn words: “We, the people of the State of Ohio, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings and promote our common welfare, do establish this Constitution.” The very freedom itself which the Constitution is made to perpetuate is the gift of Almighty God. In section 7 of the Bill of Rights it is solemnly declared, as a protection against atheistical intolerance, no less than religious persecution, that “all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience.”

At the close of the clause protecting the religious rights of the citizen, it is declared that “nothing herein shall be construed to dispense with oaths and affirmations.” The State claims the right to put every citizen on his religious honor whenever he comes within her precincts. It affirms, in reiteration of the old language of the ordinance of 1787: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, however, being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to pass suitable laws to protect every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship, and to encourage schools and the means of instruction.” Atheism says, knowledge alone is essential to good government; Ohio says, “religion, morality and knowledge.” Atheism would only protect and encourage a godless school. Ohio protects every religious denomination. Atheism finds indifference to

religion itself in the words: "No person shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship against his consent; and no preference shall be given by law to any religious society, nor shall any interference with the rights of conscience be permitted. No religious test shall be required as a qualification for office, nor shall any person be incompetent to be a witness on account of his religious belief." Ohio qualifies these words by reserving the right to impose the oath, and places the word "however" in its declaration concerning religion and morality, as if to guard against this very misconception. The constitution provides that "no religious or other sect or sects shall ever have any exclusive right to or control of any part of the school-funds of this State." The Committee on Education, in the Convention of 1851, that framed our present constitution, on July 5, made a majority and minority report. In both those reports are found these words: "No religious sect or party shall ever have exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the common school-funds of this State." After deliberate reflection the convention made a notable addition, and wrote, "No religious or other sect or sects." With prophetic wisdom these men saw that "other sects" would arise and claim the control of the people's schools. In this year of our Lord, both a religious and "another sect" have appeared at opposite doors of the council chamber in the City Hall, obstreperously commanding the Board of Education to let them in. The State of Ohio politely bows them down stairs, out of the front door into the street, saying: "Go about your own business; the common schools of Cincinnati are neither sectarian nor atheistic, but they are, and shall be, religious." So does the great authority of the State acknowledge and perpetuate the supreme authority of Almighty God.

The history of the common schools in the United States, is only a repetition of our civil history in this respect, with, perhaps, this exception: that in the education of their children the people have been slower to throw off the shackles of religious sectarianism than in their civil affairs. Every State now protects its school funds against the invasion of religious bigotry, in theory; though in some localities Catholic and in others a Protestant sect is shrewd and powerful enough, occasionally, to evade the laws. Doubtless in strong sectarian communities the prevailing sentiment of the people overflows into the common schools, as into their domestic, industrial, and even political life. It is only by the gradual growth of true wisdom and pure religion among the people, that such abuses can be overcome. And in Ohio, at least, every person thus aggrieved has a remedy at law.

In some communities, possibly in some of the States, the Bible is not generally read in schools. In Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Iowa, and West Virginia, it is a legal text-book. In

Rhode Island, New York, Ohio, and other States, there is no law concerning any form of worship, and every community is left to its own discretion in the matter. It is doubtful if any teacher could be prevented by our rules from reading the Bible in a Cincinnati school, whatever may be the rights of the parents who object. But no State, to my knowledge, has ever forbidden religious instruction of an unsectarian character in its common schools, and the authors of the resolutions that propose to expel God Almighty from the schools of Cincinnati will certainly achieve the distinction of being pioneers in this radical reform. In the common school, as in every department of our civil life, the States of this Union unite in the declaration,—neither sectarian nor atheistic, but religious.

If any sectarian abuses have crept into the public schools of Cincinnati, if any of our teachers or trustees have so parted with their common sense as to enforce on the children of the people the creeds or ceremonies of any religious sect, it is easy to find out and correct the abuse. It is claimed that the morning devotional service, wherein the teacher reads a passage from the Scriptures without explanation, unites with the pupils in a religious song, and, in some cases, in a reading of the Lord's prayer, is a "Protestant Christian form of worship." I think a little observation will show that all public worship, in all ages and lands, consists greatly in repeating prayers, singing sacred songs, and reading sacred books. These are the universal elements of worship, differently blended, but always existing, and sectarian worship invariably consists in some departure from this form.

I know that an Atheistic parent may claim that his rights are invaded by the invocation of God's name at all in the presence of his child. But Atheism, as such, has no rights under the constitution of Ohio, as Catholicism has no such rights. The State declares that no man shall be deprived of his civil rights because of his Atheism, and there it leaves him. If, emboldened by this, he turns upon the State itself, tries to knock out its underpinning, to poison the very wells of its water of life, to obscure the very atmosphere, and darken the light by which it lives and breathes; if he presumes, in short, to demand the expulsion of religion itself from the public institutions of Ohio, whether he be of foreign or native birth, a philosopher or a clown, he will ascertain that he has yet to learn the first principles of American civilization; that this republic is not an atheistic or socialistic Utopia, but is a practical government, made by practical men, who believe in Almighty God, who have the wisdom to maintain, and if need be, the strong arms to defend it. We sent five hundred thousand soldiers to heaven, and sunk uncounted millions of dollars in the sea, to defend American civilization from an aristocracy proclaiming the divine right of human

slavery. And, if need be, we have a million more young men and the rest of our property to protect our civilization against that anarchy which begins with rebellion against Almighty God.

But I ask in this connection, is all the right of such an aggrieved family lodged in the Atheistic father? Has a pious, Christian mother no rights in the education of her child? Has the child itself no protection against the contagion of what Plato calls "the disease of the soul?" If an imperious father, under the inspiration of poor philosophy or poorer whiskey, forces his Atheism into his own family, deprives his wife and little ones of the right to read the Bible, scoffs at or ridicules all the sacred instincts and associations of their life, and changes his home outwardly to a temple of ungodliness, that family has still one place of refuge; the benignant State opens the doors of her countless school-houses, and places therein noble men and tender women to teach those little ones and instruct them in their duties to themselves, to man, and to God. That mother can "bear all things and endure all things," praying in secret, and hoping and living in the future of the little darlings at school. And now comes up the father and demands that the city of Cincinnati shall become his accomplice in this bad enterprise of crushing out the religious life of his children. Excuse us, gentlemen. The city of Cincinnati is not above reproach; she needs to mend many of her bad ways, and remove the stains of many an unsavory creek. But Cincinnati has not yet, thank God, fallen so low that she can help an Atheistic parent to put out the light of God in the soul of a little child. It has been said, with a sneer, that many of the names on these great petitions have been the names of women. And pray who should remonstrate against the expulsion of religion from the public schools if not the mothers and the sisters of these little ones? Are gentlemen willing to leave this matter to the votes of the women of Cincinnati? Would they leave it to the children and youth? Atheism is generally a masculine disease, the last to assail even the most abandoned womanhood. We remember a wise old deacon, on a church council, where a brother pleaded an injured conscience in favor of some irreligious license, bringing the matter to a crisis by saying: "My brethren, we can't take down the whole side of this meeting-house to let one man come in." I don't believe the Queen City of the West, the first-born child of this new republic, will take her whole system of common schools in pieces to let a few Atheists indoctrinate the whole body of the people's children. To all such demands she will say: "My public schools are open to all wise and judicious reforms; but to retreat upon Rome or fall back upon Tom Paine, is no reform, but a lapse into the deepest darkness of the past."

The city of Cincinnati, in educational affairs, is a city set upon a hill which can not be hid. Thanks to the wisdom of a few devoted



men, and the growing liberality of her people, she has an excellent and progressive system of public schools. That system is on the eve of great expansion, through its public library and its free university, and if no side wind blows it out of shape, it will rise into a structure in whose grand proportions we shall all rejoice. The Catholic priesthood are trying with desperate pertinacity to keep the Catholic children away from it. But the Catholic laity are learning their rights as American citizens, and men are growing up who will lead their offspring into our temple of knowledge. Napoleon said, "When you would do a great thing, let alone the leaders and strike for the people." Let us hold no more conference with the Catholic clergy, but build our school-houses broad and high, make our schools the best in America—as soon as we are able make even school-books free, and invite the children of all the people to come in. Cincinnati has no conference to hold and no favors to ask of Atheism; but every child of such parents she invites to come in and take the bread and water of life freely. Across the border half a score of great states and territories, where the common school is just emerging into life, are watching the progress of our glorious temple of the instruction of the people. When those walls are set and that dome is spread, shall those commonwealths behold the stars and stripes flaunting to the breeze entwined with the black flag of Atheism? Not so. We will finish our temple, make it large enough for all, and then we will raise our flag and nail it there; that flag which our fathers raised; that flag which their sons bore across a hundred bloody fields; and every man shall know it means Liberty, Knowledge, Religion, now and forevermore.

## THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD AND THE COMMON SCHOOL.

On the 8th day of December, 1864, while a million patriot soldiers were forming the mighty line that swept the relics of the great rebellion of American despotism into the sea, Cardinal Antonelli, the soul of Pope Pius IX, sent forth a manifesto to the Catholic bishops of the whole world. This manifesto consisted of an "Encyclical Letter" and a "Syllabus of Modern Errors," and was a new platform for the Catholic priesthood, defining their relations to modern society and the affairs of the nineteenth century. With the unerring eye of despotism the great central authority of the Roman Catholic church saw that a crisis was upon it. In the destruction of American slavery the bulwark of its political power in this republic was overthrown, and freedom, with all its blessings, would prevail over the land. Every European government would be changed by this momentous event, and make haste to throw off the yoke of priestly bondage so long and grievously borne. Italy had already gone down stream, and Austria and Spain were heaving with the premonitions of the earthquake which has shaken those old imperial allies of the church out of the steadfast position of centuries into the line of progressive nations. The political ascendancy of the Catholic priesthood was forever gone, and, like a prudent commander, the great Cardinal prepared to evacuate his outer works, and retreat within the second line of intrenchments. This was *the exclusive educational control of all the Catholic children in the world*. No longer could the church hope to control the education of the children of parents outside the church in any civilized country. Even with growing freedom of the press, liberty of speech, and cheap literature, there was imminent danger that its own fold would be invaded, and its own children learn that the priest is not the infallible representative of God on earth. To avert this calamity was the aim of this manifesto, the gist of which is found in sections 45, 46, 47, 48 and 22 of the Syllabus of Errors. These sections are the concentration of a good deal of equal im-

port in the same document, and perfectly cover the position of those authorities on the question of education. Under the head of *Modern Errors*, the Pope enumerates the following :

“45. The whole control of the public schools wherein the youth of any Christian State is educated, only the Episcopal seminaries being in some degree excepted, may and should be assigned to the civil authority, and so assigned to it that no right be recognized, in any other authority whatever, to interfere with the school discipline, the direction of studies, the conferring of degrees, the selection or approbation of teachers.

“46. Nay, in the very seminaries for the education of the clergy the method of study to be adopted is subject to the civil authority.

“47. The best constitution of civil society requires that the public schools, which are open to the children of all classes, and that public institutions universally, which are devoted to higher literary and scientific instruction, and to the education of youth, be released from all authority of the church, from her moderating influence and interference, and subjected wholly to the will of the civil and political authority (to be conducted) according to the pleasure of the rulers and the standard of the common opinions of the age.

“48. That method of instructing youth can be approved by Catholic men, which is separated from the Catholic faith and from the power of the church, and which has regard exclusively, or at least principally, to a knowledge of natural things only, and to the ends of social life on earth.”

“22. The obligation by which Catholic teachers and writers are absolutely bound is confined to those things alone which are propounded by the infallible judgment of the church as dogmas of faith to be believed by all.”

This position covers the whole ground of education. From that day, in every part of the world, the Catholic bishops have moved on this line of operations. In Ireland the Primate of the Catholic church has commanded the people to leave the national schools, on pain of excommunication. The Pope himself has sent a loud-mouthed “bull” over the Alps, against the Austrian government, for granting to every church in Austria the right to educate its own children, with partial public aid. And now we are told the Empress Eugenie, the beloved defender of the church in France, has journeyed to the Orient, to present the educational question to the Eastern church. The infallibility of the Pope will be proclaimed; all reluctant prelates and priests will be silenced, or put out, and the priesthood will become a unit all over the world, in drawing Catholic children out of the educational pandemonium of modern society into the ark of the Most High.

On the heels of this manifesto the last great council of the

Catholic church in the United States, held at Baltimore, Md., enforced this duty, and the bishops were polarized on this question of the relation of the Catholic church to the American system of common schools. Up to this day the Catholic priesthood in the United States had been granted a long tether in this difficult field of operations. It would seem that every bishop was permitted to manage educational affairs according to his own judgment, so that the result came out on the side of the church. Thus, in New England, where the general enlightenment had even reached the Catholic people, the priesthood saw that they could only go with the stream, and permitted the laity to educate their children in the admirable public schools, serving themselves on boards of education, and making little public opposition to the system. In New York, the headquarters of Catholic influence, political intrigue, and social aristocracy, their astute bishops played now upon one, now upon another party; now sending and now withdrawing their children from public instruction; till, last winter, a bill was forced through the legislature of the State to give a proportion of the school moneys of the city of New York to *private* schools, under which they support sectarian Catholic education. In Cincinnati, for several years, the priesthood has been at open war with the national system, and has built up an elaborate system of parochial schools, supplemented by a high school and college, the latter under the control of the Jesuits. But now all differences of policy are subdued to the papal mandate. Everywhere in the United States the priesthood are moving to gather the Catholic children into sectarian Romish schools controlled by the church.

But education is expensive, and such education as the American people are giving to their children in the common schools is beyond the power of any religious sect to maintain. Only the whole people can support popular schools as good as now are found in every large city and town of the northern states. The Catholic laity see that they are compelled, by this priestly programme, to pay for an inferior article of Catholic parochial education while their children are forbidden (by that priesthood alone) to go into the splendid temple of knowledge built by the money of the whole people. They are beginning to revolt. A portion have revolted, and send their children to the public schools, running the risk of the Archbishop's anathema. A much larger number are pushing toward the temple, clamoring for leave to come in. Able leaders of this class, especially among the Irish Catholics, are arising, who stoutly demand that the clergy shall grant some reprieve from this infallible rule that cripples their children in the race for knowledge, which, in America, is the race for success in life. The Catholic laity have furnished to the republic a roll of eminent men, and they are asking the Catholic priesthood, like Father Hyacinthe, why

their religion should separate them from the nineteenth century. The people grumble at the church-tax for parochial instruction, and are not, like Archbishop Purcell, perfectly satisfied with the schools themselves. To this demand the priesthood has presented its ultimatum. *Divide the public school money among the religious sects, as in Canada and Austria, and other European States; at any rate, give us our proportion of the public money.* On this condition they consent to call their Catholic parochial schools public schools, as they would be very willing to call their church the State church, and pay its expenses out of the public treasury. There is no instance in which the Catholic clergy now offers more than this: *The State shall pay to support schools which are under the control of the Catholic priesthood, on condition that those sectarian schools shall change their name to public schools.* On this platform they stand, and besiege every legislature in the United States. Already is a vast system maturing to prevent the emancipated slaves from entering the new Southern public schools; and, ere long, this educational war will break out over the border. If they can succeed in this they will still retain control of a great body of American citizens and perpetuate the power of the church.

I make no charges against the Catholic priests as men. I would deprive them of no rights as American citizens. But the Catholic priesthood in the United States is a close religious corporation, under the control of an infallible foreign Pope, elected by a college of cardinals, not one of whom resides in the United States, a majority of whom are Italians. As a body, that priesthood has always been hostile to American ideas and institutions. If it could have had its way ten years ago, this republic would have been dismembered. It wishes to gather all Catholic children into its exclusive fold, that it may form an ecclesiastical kingdom of God within the republic which can finally control it. It drives at the very heart of American life when it attempts to destroy our American system of public instruction and hurl us back upon the exploded European system of schools controlled by religious sects.

This object it attempts to secure by two means: argument and policy. Of these the argument is the shadow, and the policy the substance. Despotism always tries to amuse and occupy the thinking classes by subtle argumentation, while it drives on like fate to its inevitable end. The argument against the slave power closed fifty years ago, in 1820, and all the reasoning after that time, by the slaveholders, was a cloud of mist sent out to conceal the machinations of its policy. The argument against sectarian education at public expense was long since closed. The Catholic priesthood still fills the air with the shadowy ghosts of ideas long since buried, giving thereby employment to its dialectic skill, and concealing its covert approaches to the heart of the American school.

The argument of the priesthood converges on one point. The Catholic citizens of the United States pay taxes to support the public school. That school, they sometimes say, is "atheistic;" sometimes declare "sectarian Protestant." according as the occasion demands. Within the last three months, Archbishop Purcell has made both declarations concerning the common schools. In either case it is obnoxious to the priesthood, whose ultimatum is Catholic religious education. It is an oppression to compel the Catholic citizen to pay for an institution his priest declares hostile to his religion. So it becomes a question of conscience. Observe, in this argument, *the conscience of the priesthood is put forward as the conscience of the laity.* The Catholic Irishmen of Boston, the most intelligent body of Irish citizens in the United States, have not found it contrary to conscience to send their children to the public school, where the Bible is read by legal command. Ten intelligent Catholic gentlemen sit in our board of education, some of them its most useful members, have sworn an oath to administer the system as now arranged, and do not look like men who expect to wake up any morning in purgatory. The fact is, *the conscience here spoken of is the conscience of the Catholic priesthood as reconstructed by the manifesto of December 8, 1864.*

Now, even if the common school were, as the priests assert, a Protestant sectarian institution, and if the American system of republican government made us a Protestant sectarian nation, there would be no oppression in the taxation by which the public system of schools is supported. For the common school is not a theological, or ecclesiastical, or primarily a religious, institution. It is not even primarily an educational institution. It is a politico-educational institution, established primarily to qualify the American people to support American republican government. I have shown, on a former occasion, that our government and order of society recognize and are built upon religion as separated from its sectarian forms. The common school, as an American public institution, acknowledges the universal obligation to worship God, and do good to man, as the condition of republican life. But it is chiefly concerned to fit the people for American society, to become American citizens. It may be that education alone will not enable a people to obtain or preserve republican government, but it is certain no people destitute of education can obtain or preserve it. No great European nation can become a republic till its people are far more enlightened and accustomed to thought than now. Our slave States lost their liberties, and, for four years, were held up to a devastating war, by their aristocracy, because of the ignorance of their people. Without education the American people can neither vote right, nor preserve order, nor protect any part of their free nationality. So every State has now established the unsectarian

common school, as the corner stone of the nation, since it has been demonstrated that no system of sectarian, parochial schools can educate the mass of the people up to that point.

Now, the Catholic citizen, like every citizen, shares in every public advantage of this intelligence of the people. As a Catholic, he is indebted to it. For why are all the legal and political disabilities that every Protestant nation in Europe imposes on Catholics here removed? Why can a Catholic be President of the United States, and not the King of Great Britain? Why are Catholics, as a sect, in no such danger from popular violence as in Great Britain? Why has the Catholic child free access to all our schools, supported by public money? Because America is a republic, and American citizens are educated in the common schools above European ideas of oppression. And now this priesthood turns and smites the very hand that guards the religious and civil liberties of its people, in a country where public opinion is against its religion, complaining that it is an unbearable oppression to pay the tax that educates the people to protect a government which guards itself from public harm. Besides, the Catholic tax-payer, like every other tax-payer who sends no child to school, receives a thousand fold the value of his tax, in general protection of person, property, rights, and the blessings of our national life.

The common school is a vital part of our American system of government. It is religious in the same way, and no more Protestant than the United States and State governments, or American society in general. Why does not this priesthood demand that Catholic taxes should be used to support a government in every State, under the control of itself? The manifesto of 1864 asserts the infallible right of the church to unite with the civil government in ruling the people. Why does not the Archbishop of Cincinnati claim that the legislature of Ohio shall consult him in respect to legislation for Catholic citizens? Why does not this priesthood withdraw from an order of society where free speech and press are the law of the land; where they can not amass and control such vast ecclesiastical properties as once in Mexico; where they must be taxed to pay for Protestant chaplains in congress, army and navy, Protestant officials in prisons; perhaps a Protestant sheriff to hang a Catholic murderer who has just been absolved by his priest? Are Catholic politicians forbidden by their priests to hold office under this "godless" government? The logic of this demand for sectarian education at public expense implies a separate government; why not claim that? The last Catholic general council at Baltimore does claim this for church property, prisons, and public institutions, but we hear no noise about it in public. The fact is, the priesthood are aware it is a large enterprise to claim all this. They have seen what becomes of an aristocracy that claims to be exempt

from our republican institutions, and they forbear. They know, moreover, that the educational field is the key of the whole position. Give up that, and all else follows of itself. *We shall not give that up.*

But I deny that the common school is sectarian in any other sense than the government and society of the United States are sectarian. The people of the United States, first of all peoples, declared that there is a religion that is not a sect, or an establishment; the worship of Almighty God, reverence for His law, and the service of man. From this universal religion, the absolute basis of all churches, creeds, and forms, the rights of man, and all the distinctive principles of American society are derived. This is the light, warmth, and atmosphere in which our republic lives and moves. As far as men can overcome the obstacles to the application of any great idea, they have applied this in every department of state and national life. But the Catholic priesthood has always resisted this American idea. It says there is but one religion, the Catholic, and every other form is false, and exposes men to damnation. It ridicules the pretensions of nine-tenths of the American people to be religious at all, and denounces the recognition and protection of all denominations as religious bodies by the State. Of course, to such a view, our common schools are sectarian and atheistic at the same time, and will be so until they submit to the infallible dictation of an obscure Italian prince who claims to be the representative of Almighty God. Now, Americans are generous. If this poor prince has a hard run upon his treasury, we in Cincinnati are willing to pass round the hat and send him \$200,000 as a donation, though we don't believe in supporting a government by a subscription paper. But when this amiable old gentleman turns upon us, and claims infallible authority to control the education of American children, and demands the destruction of our common school, we respectfully decline.

A portion of the Protestant clergy have always fallen into the same error, insisting that their own sectarianism is the whole of religion. But, while the priesthood is all-powerful in the Catholic, the people is supreme in the Protestant church. While the Catholic priesthood in America has followed the law of every aristocracy, and now ultimates itself in Romish infallibility, the Protestant people have perpetually tended toward liberty, and forced their clergy to follow them. Thus, every year, the grand ideal of our fathers, of public religion divorced from sectarianism, has been more nearly approached. There never was so little sectarianism in public American affairs as to-day, and there will be less and less with every coming year, unless some great excitement, provoked by Catholic or Atheistic intolerance, forces a reaction in the public mind. The American people do not expect to please the Catholic



priesthood in this matter, but they do intend to guard all the rights of Catholic, Hebrew, or Radical citizens as sacredly as the infirmity of human affairs will permit. The new leaders of Catholic religious reform in this country will learn in time that nothing is to be hoped from Rome, but everything is to be hoped from Washington. Instead of chopping theological and political dialectics with the Jesuits, if they will turn to their own people, disabuse them of their prejudices against our common schools, show them the real catholicity of the system, and persuade them to accept such opportunities as the children of no generation have known before, they will become the real benefactors of our adopted population. The current of American civilization is tending irresistibly toward all the freedom humanity can endure. It will not plunge into the bottomless pit of Atheism to gratify any sect of philosophy. It will not turn back and drown the nation in a stagnant flood of despotism, to please a visionary old gentleman at Rome. The people's answer to all this labyrinth of jesuitic and atheistic argumentation on religion in the common schools is this: We have established the American common school as a vital part of our political institutions, the corner stone of our republican order of society. As a part of American society, it recognizes the claims, and lives in the atmosphere, of an unsectarian religion, and we intend neither to be quibbled nor forced away from this central fortress of our liberties. And the American people mean what they say, and have learned how to dispose of all enemies to the Republic who push their hostile theories into rebellious deeds.

But the Catholic priesthood do not rely upon argument to destroy the common school. Their strong weapon is their policy, and that policy is the same as of all despotism since the foundation of the world: to divide, distract, and provoke bitter conflict between the friends of this institution until it is destroyed, or so damaged that they can come in and administer upon its remains. Liberty always has this disadvantage: it is always agitated, and liable to be divided by the freedom of speech, thought, and policy, among its friends, and can only enforce anything by the power of an overwhelming majority. Despotism moves like a fate, compact, decisive, ready to strike its foe when least prepared and least united. This policy the Catholic priesthood has always adopted in relation to the common school. That institution has grown up to its present magnificent estate in America through a cloud of controversy and compromise which few of us can realize. Let any man spend three months in England, talking with all classes of English people on educational affairs, beholding what a stormy ocean of prejudice must be crossed before that nation can arrive at any practical system for educating its ignorant multitudes, and he will admire the wisdom and common sense that has carried us safe to our present

glorious result. At every point in this creative enterprise the people have seen this black brigade of the Catholic priesthood, now striking an exposed point like a thunderbolt, now skulking in a covert and hinting the mischief it dare not attempt. The only wonder is, that the people have kept their hands off an aristocracy that has pursued their favorite institution with such a tireless hate. But the people learn fast. An intelligent people, in the long run, is more than a match for any aristocracy, and in this case the machinations of the priesthood to destroy, divide and demoralize the common school will come to naught.

The history of our Cincinnati schools is full of warning on this point. The one constant fact through all our educational progress has been the attempt of the Catholic priesthood to capture the institution, or, in the event of failure, to destroy it. Up to the year 1842, that priesthood hoped to gain control not only of the schools, but the city. Their success in making proselytes in a few wealthy and cultivated circles, and the general aristocratic state of society, were encouraging. They therefore kept their children in what they now call our sectarian and atheistic schools, hoping, like the slaveholders in national affairs, to finally subjugate and govern the whole. But for the last thirty years it has become more evident that Cincinnati is to become a great northern metropolis, in all respects conformed to American ideas, and the priesthood has acted accordingly. It has been engaged in two operations: *First*. It has persistently pushed the building of Catholic school-houses by funds in part extorted from the masses of the Catholic people. These buildings are commonly adjacent to their churches, a part of the sacred enclosure, and in no way adapted for our system of public schools. As fast as completed they have been filled with Catholic children, who are educated under the authority of the priests, the expenses being met by a weekly tax upon the Catholic people. They have just completed a great addition to the Jesuit college, which is heavily endowed, and intended to supplant our system of high schools and the McMicken university; and they already own the Catholic Institute, which can easily be changed to a library and literary exchange of the town. It is probable that not fewer than fifteen thousand children are either taught in these buildings or kept away from the public schools by the influence of the priests. *Second*. During all this time there has been but little public agitation on the topic. The common schools have grown so fast and their friends have been so occupied in their development, especially since the war, have been so pressed to keep up with the demands of our increasing population, that little has been known or noticed of Catholic educational operations. But all these years this priesthood has been busy in sowing seeds of dissension and disaffection in every region of the city. It has toiled unceasingly among our wealthy

people, persuading them to educate their daughters in the Catholic schools of Europe or their convents at home. It has destroyed the faith of many families in our high schools, and in every way sought to alienate the wealth and fashion of the city from this great popular institution. It has seized upon a large class of cultivated indifferentists and imbued them at once with skepticism for American institutions and contempt for the people's education. It has worked with great success, and to-day one of our obstacles is a considerable body of elegant and wealthy people, who are either wholly ignorant of or bitterly prejudiced against our common schools. It has perpetually fomented political jealousy of this institution among our people of southern descent and Democratic proclivities, hoping to use this body of our fellow-citizens for the final dismemberment of the schools. It is on the watch perpetually to blow up an ignorant prejudice among the people against the administration of the system. Now the town is convulsed by charges of bribery and corruption in the Board, and it turns out the School Board has purchased an admirable lot for a school-house, adjoining a Catholic school, which spoils a nice little arrangement of its own to buy the land adjacent to our Hughes high school building. Again, the air is black with charges of the brutality of our teachers, and one would think a new slaughter of the innocents was inaugurated in these seminaries of godless learning. Again, the journals teem with general charges of sectarian bigotry, and we are charged with converting the school-room to a Protestant Christian church. In the same breath the Archbishop and the *Telegraph* denounce the schools as atheistic and under the influence of such infidel parsons as the humble author of the present remarks. It is true these charges generally come from quarters outside the priesthood; it is well they should appear to express a growing dissatisfaction and disgust of the people with their schools. The old salts down on Cape Ann say they can tell before they leave their bed on a Spring morning whether the wind is in the East; for the East wind comes straight from the Newfoundland icebergs, and no man who has once felt its knife in his marrow can mistake that peculiar chill. Any observing man in Cincinnati knows when the educational wind blows from the cathedral and the Jesuit's college, and pays little heed to the protestations of the parties who are invoked to puff their cheeks in public and swell the dismal gale.

And now the time has apparently come for a new public demonstration to distract and demoralize the friends of public education in the city. It is well known that a considerable body of the Irish Catholic people are growing restless and dissatisfied with their church education, and desire to send their children to the public institutions. Of themselves they would probably not object to the schools as they are; but they dread a quarrel with the priesthood

of their church. This constituency is represented in the School Board by perhaps a fourth of its members, who are at once Catholics, friends of the public schools, and greatly desirous of bringing these people in. On the other hand, there is a considerable body of people, chiefly of foreign birth and education, of extreme radical opinions on religious and social affairs. They are led, to a large extent, by expatriated European democrats and revolutionists. Some of them were reared in the Catholic church, and have sprung from her arms into a complete negation of religion itself. Most of them, in their rebound from European tyranny, have adopted opinions radically inconsistent with the religious and social ideas that underlie our American system of society. Hitherto they have acted with the party of freedom in politics, were intensely patriotic during the war, and have been the firm friends and often the enlightened reformers of our public schools. The people, out of gratitude for their services, have given them an influence and position in the School Board altogether disproportioned to the relative popularity of their peculiar ideas, and up to this year they had taken no advantage of that confidence to make any public demonstration against the prevailing convictions of the community. The Hebrews, too, are in the schools in force, among their most enlightened and hearty supporters.

Now here is just the field in which the priesthood loves to operate. An accidental result of the elections has thrown into the Board perhaps twenty-five members who are not Protestant Christians, though friends of the public schools. The thing to be done was to combine this accidental majority for some assault upon the harmony of public education which should arouse Protestant bigotry and Atheistic intolerance and Hebrew prejudice, and set the friends of the public schools in Cincinnati generally by the ears. Such a happy state of affairs could not fail to disgust the community, damage the schools and pave the way for a division of the school money among the different religious sects. A plan was conceived with such admirable skill and so adroitly set in motion that in a less intelligent community than Cincinnati it might have succeeded. Mysterious hints went forth from the Bishop's palace that some amicable adjustment of the old difference in these rival educational systems might now be hoped, and the representatives of the reforming Catholics in the Board were urged to bring their brethren to a private interview with certain ecclesiastical parties. The meeting was held and the outlines of a plan of union proposed. The heart of the matter was in two propositions: *First*. the School Board should hire the Catholic school-houses and bring the Catholic schools within the control of the public system. So far the thing looked well. We need, already, several new school-houses. We can not afford to build, and certainly the Catholic school-houses

must be had to accommodate the Catholic children. *Second*, There shall be no religious teaching in any of the public schools, Catholic or public. All shall be swept clean of any "taint," not only of "theology," but of religion itself. This of course was grateful to the radical members and their constituents, and would not offend the great mass of careless and indifferent people who don't care whether the Bible or any religion is found in the school-room. Even religious people might question whether it were not well to waive the matter of Biblical reading or religious instruction, provided so great an object as the union of all the schools could be accomplished. But now comes in a little proposition which, like a lady's postscript, contains the soul of the plan: *that our old friends and admirers, the Catholic priesthood, should have the exclusive use of these Catholic school-houses for two days in the week for religious purposes.* That, of course, meant that on those days the same scholars and the same teachers would have been gathered in the same school-houses for Catholic religious instruction; in short, instead of teaching Catholicism every day in the week, secular knowledge was to be imparted on five days, and all the power of the church summoned for the two remaining days to the work of saving the children's souls according to the method of the priesthood. Observe that *on those two days the public school-houses are closed by rule of the Board, and their use for any outside purpose strictly forbidden.* The radical members, with a strange lack of their usual penetration, fell into this plan and agreed to advocate a proposition to banish all religion except the Catholic from the public schools, placing in the hands of the priesthood the only right to enter a public school-house as religious teachers. *It was a magnificently contrived scheme for planting a Catholic mission in the very heart of the public schools of Cincinnati,* and the School Board almost laid down its arms and surrendered at discretion.

But the plan got out and the people saw its practical meaning. In one day after publication this wretched compromise was blasted by popular indignation. The next step of the priesthood was to retreat in good order. The Archbishop proposed a conference with a committee of the Board, to discuss the whole matter, and it was granted. Here no longer appeared the smiling, compromising face of the Jesuit, but a stern and insolent prelate, denouncing the whole common school system, and holding up the Papal syllabus as the ultimatum. Under cover of the utter astonishment of the two parties so cleverly drawn into this position, the Bishop and his clergy retreated in excellent order and no longer appear on the horizon, doubtless having retired to the cloister for meditation and prayer. But one party was left among the wounded to the tender mercies of the victorious people, and that party was the Catholic reformers in the School Board. Having used these gentlemen to the utmost,

the ecclesiastical batteries are now opened upon them and they are threatened with the shadow of things to come.

Now comes the fifth act of the drama. The priesthood has withdrawn with lofty scorn, leaving the Board distracted and embittered by an angry discussion on the only question that can divide the friends of the public schools, religious instruction and reading the Bible in the school-room. Calvinist and Atheist, Reformed Hebrew and Reformed Catholic, Ritualist and Liberalist, and Radical, are set in motion outside, and the result is a new religious agitation covering the whole ground of public instruction. This is the very harvest of the priesthood. While the friends of the common school are tearing each other in pieces, and a radical measure, proposing to sweep religion out of the school, is held in terror over the Board; this holy corporation, in its retirement, can watch the strife and strike as judgment may direct, fondly hoping that some wild and rash measure will be forced through the Board, which will perpetuate the conflict until the people, wearied and disgusted, destroy or cripple their darling institution, and support Catholic education with public funds.

I do not believe this last plot of the priesthood will succeed. I am not in the secrets of the Reformed Catholic or the radical members of the Board, who are expected to combine and pull the Archbishop's chestnuts out of the fire. But I am inclined to think my Catholic colleagues will decline to be used for such a purpose, even at the risk of the displeasure of their priesthood. They are American citizens and know that only in American institutions is their hope for liberty and the true success of their people in American life. Sooner or later they must fight this battle for the emancipation of education from priestly control, as our fathers fought it in America a century ago. If they do not see this now, it will be seen ere long. The only hope of the Catholic people in this country is in clinging fast to American institutions. There stands the Pope's syllabus, and there stands the people's school, and finally they must go altogether to one or the other. The syllabus means the despotism they left Europe to escape; the common school means the freedom they came to the new world to find.

The people are watching the radical members of the Board with an anxiety not unmixed with humor. Will they, after all their sufferings and protestations, and lifelong hostility against the Catholic priesthood, now turn and do the very thing the priests ardently desire? Are they so wedded to their peculiar religious theories that they will break forever with the mighty Protestant Christian people of this republic, with whom they have so long and harmoniously labored? Are they ready to alienate every Protestant Christian church in this city from the public school by spurning the Bible from its threshold, at the dictation of the deadliest enemy of pop-

ular education? There may be men so wedded to their theories, so contemptuous of religion, so ignorant of the great American heart, so reckless in policy, that only an earthquake under their feet can bring them to their senses; but I do not believe our old friends and colleagues are disposed to commit suicide in this public manner. The people perfectly understand another mischievous class of men, who have gone into this agitation with no principle, and would set the common school on fire for the new sensation of watching the blaze.

The argument is nearly closed, and the people's mind is made up. If this thing is done, there is a day after to-morrow, and a long day after that. If the Board of Education is wise, it will throw this firebrand out the window, defer all discussion on the proper method of reading the Bible or giving religious instruction to a calmer future; forgive and forget its little rivalries and differences, and, like a band of brothers, unite to build up the common school; wishing the good Archbishop meanwhile a safe and happy journey to his beloved Rome.

## THE BIBLE IN THE COMMON SCHOOL.

When Charles McMicken made his splendid bequest of a million dollars to the city of Cincinnati, to establish a free college for boys and girls, he coupled it in his will with the stipulation that while no denominational theology should be taught, the Holy Bible, in the Protestant version, should be a text book in the McMicken university. We may believe that a man so eminently practical had the best reasons for such an act. Mr. McMicken came to Cincinnati a penniless youth; he spent his life in the South-west, his business transactions ranging over the whole region between New Orleans and the city of his adoption. He knew every variety of human life in the valley of the Mississippi, and understood the strange and incoherent materials out of which our new civilization is emerging. He had seen the gambler plying his trade on the river steamer, the slave auctioneer knocking off his human merchandise. He knew how hard it is for men to be honest, and pure, and truthful, and patriotic in such a country. He saw how soon the mass of mankind forget the religion of their youth when thrown without restraint into such a state of society. He saw, on one hand, the tremendous power of the Romish priesthood, entrenched at the mouth of the Mississippi, slowly pushing up the valley. He saw the blasphemous irreligion and polished Atheism that were even then eating their way into the souls of western young men. He doubtless supposed that his magnificent bequest would establish here the great university west of the mountains, and over that university he would raise the old Bible banner, the symbol and assurance of victory in every great conflict for civil and religious liberty in modern times. After years of litigation, enough of that great donation has been preserved to found in Cincinnati a free university, reverent of religion, cherishing the Bible in its heart. If the enemies of the Book now succeed in expelling it from the common school, the next assault will be made on our high schools and free university and public library, until within the entire inclosure of our great system of public education, that Book which the modern world has always proclaimed the best, will be the one which can not show its head.

The people who settled this western world, and planted the republican institutions under which we live, brought with them from the East that great university, the American common school, divested of sectarian and ecclesiastical influence, but planted on the



religion of the modern civilized world as proclaimed in the Bible. The Puritans from New England, the Presbyterians of New Jersey, the men who left the South to escape the threatened tempest of a slave rebellion, the German Lutherans of Pennsylvania, the Churchmen and the liberal Calvinists of New York, were all united in this: that the Bible should be a text book in the western common school. Wherever that American principle has controlled a western community, the Bible flag has waved over the common school-house. Wherever the Catholic priesthood and the Atheists and religious indifferentists of any community have been strong enough, they have united, as now in Cincinnati, to banish the Bible from the schools. And, universally, the parties to this compact have been chiefly of foreign birth and education; members of a priesthood that looks to Rome for its instructions, or adopted citizens who, in their recoil from the despotism of a State church in Europe, have repudiated religion, and adopted the astounding watchword that Republicanism and Atheism are convertible terms. For the number of people born and educated in the United States, who have adopted these views, is so small as to attract no notice, being confined chiefly to people who constitutionally take the opposite side in any public controversy, and politicians anxious to get office and untroubled by religious principles. As in Cincinnati now, so everywhere in those States which have established the common school, the vast majority of the people who best understand and are the reliable support of American institutions, are determined that the Bible shall not be expelled from the public school. And the great battle which is to wage through every western state around this point, is a conflict between those who believe religion is the foundation of the American republic, without which it will go the way of all the republics of old, and those who believe the American people can do without religion in the most momentous relations of their life, the relation of citizens of their country. The former party raise the Bible as their standard; the latter is in the condition of the Southern confederacy before it had made its flag.

This portion of the western people believes the great West is not great enough to get on without the religion of love to God and love to man. It is willing to grant everything that may be claimed for the material and political destiny of these new commonwealths. Let Chicago become the metropolis of the solar system if she will. Let Cincinnati be not only "Queen of the West," but queen of "all outdoors," if she can. Let the dreams of the Louisville Convention be magnified *ad infinitum*. Let even Alaska outshine the roseate visions of the great statesman-prophet of our Pacific empire. Let Europe be inclined at an angle that will precipitate fifty millions of her people on the Atlantic coast, and John China-

man darken the ocean by his illimitable oncoming. Let every merchant be a millionaire, and every politician a senator, and every young lady a governor's wife. Come what will in that line, this portion of our people says: The almighty West can never outgrow the Almighty God, and never become so powerful that it can safely despise the least precept of God's almighty law. They intend to teach that fact to their children and their children's children to the remotest generation. They see that the children of the West live their most vital life in the common school. There is the university that trains them for American affairs; fixes their language, their modes of thought, their ideals of life. Multitudes of western parents have no time for any instruction of their children. Other multitudes are utterly unfitted by character to teach them what is true and good. The sectarian churches, by their denominational bigotry and bitter contentions, repel myriads of the old and young from the Sunday worship of God, and too often furnish the strongest argument to the atheist and the scoffer. This portion of our people does not believe in the specious doctrine of the *Catholic Telegraph*, that a parent has the sole right to decree whether his child shall come up fit or unfit to be an American citizen. They have not that abounding faith their opponents seem to have in the power of sectarian Sunday schools to insure public morality. They want every possible assurance that the youth of the West shall be brought under the influence of that "religion, morality, and education," which the constitution of Ohio declares "essential to good government." So the Western people of American birth and habits of thought believe that unsectarian religion should be recognized where childhood lives its most vital life—in the very heart of the children's republic, in the Western common school.

Now, why do the Western people select the Bible as the one book to represent religion in their common school?

*First.* Because the Bible contains the simplest, strongest, and a universally acknowledged statement of this absolute religion of love to God and man, which has been the ideal of every modern state and the creative principle of modern civilization. The Bible is the summit of human literature. It contains the noblest philosophy ever yet proclaimed to man. It inculcates the loftiest piety and the most rational and practical morality of all religious books. It exhibits the most exalted types of character that have appeared in earthly affairs. It gives the best account yet given of the highest relations and duties of man in time and eternity. The whole Christian Church, which practically means the modern world, in a thousand ways, has adopted it as its final rule of life. Every modern government has declared that it contains the divine law from which all authority on earth is derived. What book so fit, then, to be placed in the common school of this new land as that

which has come down to us indorsed by the reverence of all the generations of modern times? In this new land where almost everything is adrift, around what banner shall we rally our youth if not around the Holy Bible, which represents to us that one thing in man, which can never change, that immutable center of his eternal life, the religion of love to God and love to man?

If we put out the Bible as the standard of public religion, what shall we put in? What other book, what collection of religious and moral precepts culled from all the literatures of antiquity, can rival the Hebrew Scriptures in that loftiness and grandeur which are the majestic simplicity of everlasting truth? Gather into one volume all that has been said by all the philosophers and founders of religion of the ancient world, and any one of a dozen of those old Hebrew psalms is worth them all. Is there any better code of morals than the Ten Commandments; any sweeter religious stories than a score of those old Hebrew tales; any practical wisdom surpassing the Proverbs of Solomon; any prophetic enthusiasm for man beyond the visions of Isaiah? Ransack all modern literature which has grown up under the inspiration of the New Testament, is there a better guide for Western American life than the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer? Shall we banish all religious books, and leave instruction in religion and morality entirely to our teachers? How long before that system would bring in the creed and ceremonies of every church to wage their destructive war in the community of the children? We place the Bible in the school without note, comment, or explanation, because no book or teacher so well enforces the universal religion of love. When a child looks at the sun, it is not needful to say, there is the light. When a child reads the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, repeats the Lord's Prayer and beholds the character of Jesus, he does not need to be told; there is religion and morality at their fountain head.

It is false to assert that the Bible is read in the common school on account of any theological opinion or theory concerning its inspiration. The Catholic and the Hebrew, the Protestant Evangelical, and the Protestant Liberal, the Deist and the Skeptic, all have their own theories concerning the different degrees of inspiration of different portions of the Bible; indeed, differ essentially as to the meaning of inspiration itself; but they all agree with the greatest men of modern times in declaring that the Holy Bible contains the best religion and morality and the loftiest types of human character accessible to mankind. The Bible is holy, not because of any of our theories of inspiration, but because, as a fact confessed by all competent witnesses, it contains the holiest rule and example for human life. Nobody pretends to deny this fact except an out-and-out Atheist, or a man who repudiates religion and morality itself.

The enemies of the Bible in the school will not be permitted to burden the good book with the theories of any religious or irreligious sect about its inspiration. The American people don't adopt things on the strength of theories; they adopt everything on its own actual merits. They believe in the Bible because it is the best guide to morals and religion, as they support the common school because it is the best way to educate the mass of American youth. If the eminent gentlemen who discoursed against the Bible in the school-room, at Pike's Hall last evening, will bring forth a better book for the instruction of the youth of Cincinnati, in religion and morals, than the Bible, we will adopt it; and we would suggest that their eminent scholarship might better be employed in producing that new Bible than in persuading the people to throw aside the holiest book in all the world.

But the Bible contains a great deal that children can not understand without explanation. It contains much that is improper for little children to read, or even to know. Great scholars are divided respecting the interpretation of much contained therein. There is a good deal of mythical history, primeval science, not to say barbarous morality between those covers. So say the opponents of the Bible in the public school. Well, what then? The Bible, then, is like everything else in this world. It has its weak places and human limitations. You do not deny it contains the loftiest religion and morality in the simplest form, best adapted to the instruction of the child; but you say that it contains, along with this, a great deal that is not the highest, and you object to placing it as a whole before the children in the school. If you had anything else in the common school that was unmixed good; if there were any thing in this city not mixed all through and through with human imperfections; if you, yourselves, were infallibly wise and righteous, that might be a reason why we should expel the Bible because it is not altogether suitable for little children to read. You reject the Bible, which undeniably contains the highest and best things in the world, and leave the children to other moral and religious influences, of lower value, equally or more fatally mixed with the leaven of impropriety. Any system of philosophy, any theory of geology, history, language, you teach in school is involved in as much error and uncertainty as hangs about any portion of the Bible. You don't wait till all the vital questions connected with science are settled, until you teach it. You say certain great facts are established, are "positive truth," and you teach science for the sake of that established truth. You don't pretend that your teachers are perfect men and women, either in their scholarship, their manhood or womanhood. You select the best you can obtain

and say your children must run the ordinary risks of life. You send your children to school, in many parts of our city, through streets where they see in a month more debauchery and diabolism than are described by old Solomon. Your newspapers teem with revelations as disgusting as those denounced by Paul in the cities of the Roman empire. Even your churches are half human, as you all have had occasion to confess. Why do you keep your children in this city life at all, with all these elements of perversion around them? Because the city contains the best as well as the worst things in human society. The good is stronger in the city than in the country as well as the bad. You reason wisely that the true way to teach wisdom and virtue to youth is to place them in contact with the most inspiring and powerful influences for wisdom and virtue and trust they will learn to reject what is foolish and bad. Now, why not act thus reasonably in this matter of the Bible in the schools? Place your children in contact with its unrivaled precepts of virtue and wisdom and its inspiring ideals of character and trust them to be instructed thereby. If a boy or girl fully takes in the ten commandments and the beatitudes, is there any great danger of falling into the vices of Absalom or becoming a modern Jezebel? If your child learns to love its enemies and pray the last prayer on the cross, can't you trust it to avoid the weaknesses of the old Hebrew kings? If he hears the Lord's prayer always ringing through his soul and beholds the golden rule of love shining like the sun along his path, will he be apt to lose his way amid the logic of Paul, in the maze of the Jewish law, in the mystic labyrinth of the prophecies, or the cloudy grandeurs of the Apocalypse? You must trust a little to human nature here as everywhere in life.

The plain fact about this Bible reading, which is persistently kept out of sight by its enemies, is this: The Bible reading in the Cincinnati common school consists of the reading of short selections for a few minutes, by the teachers at the opening of school in the morning; the repetition, in some schools, of the Lord's prayer, and the quotation of a few of its best known chapters in the school reading books. The passages read or recited by the children are, with hardly an exception, those which would be selected by the most judicious committee which should attempt to make a Bible manual for the use of scholars. The simplest passages of the Old and New Testament; those that are known and can be repeated by almost every child in school; those that have passed into all modern literature and become domesticated, even in the newspaper, are those the children hear. No teacher would be sustained a moment who should depart essentially from this method of reading the Bible in the school. Our teachers are neither fools nor bigots; they understand better than any other class of people those portions of

Scripture best adapted for the use of childhood ; and those they read. I believe there is nothing in the Bible which, if properly understood, is unprofitable for even childhood to know. But I, with every friend of the Bible in the schools, understand that we must deal with that book just as we deal with everything in life ; take therefrom what is best adapted to childhood, without explanation, and leave the rest to maturer years and other methods of instruction. I went, in Europe, to see Mont Blanc ; not because it was in all respects more interesting than other mountains, but because I wished to see the physical summit of Europe. There was a good deal in the Mont Blanc range that I should not have ridden twelve hours astride a lazy mule to behold ; a great deal of ragged, obscure, dangerous, repulsive scenery. There were fifty exquisite mountain pinnacles bristling about the vale of Chamouni more attractive at first glance, apparently higher than it. But up there, thirty miles off, lay that modest dome of snow, first kindled by the morning light, the last illumined by the glory of the dying day. It was the top of Europe that I spent that toilsome week to see. I stand by the Bible in the school because I want the children of America to always have in sight the summit of the wisdom, the morality, and the religion of mankind. I have no idea they will understand it all ; many of them will hardly look that way. But I would keep that summit exalted above all the generations of childhood, believing that no little one is so utterly gone in heedlessness, or stupidity, or naughtiness, that some time in its school life it will not look upward to that mountain summit of thought flaming with a radiance from higher worlds ; that summit where man is transfigured and becomes indeed divine.

*Second.* The American people have placed the Bible in the school-room because that book has become the type of civil and religious liberty in modern times. Its scholastic and literary opponents constantly fall into the pedantry of discussing the question as a matter of literary or educational criticism. But the religious people of this republic regard it in quite another light. For the last three hundred years the Bible has been to the cause of civil and religious liberty in the modern world exactly what the stars and stripes have always been to the American Union. It is still, by common consent, the banner around which in every nation the masses rally to resist the encroachments of imperial, aristocratic, or ecclesiastical despotism. It remains to-day in America the symbol of all we hold most dear.

One evening I found my little boy reading the Bible to the Catholic servant girl in the kitchen. She insisted that he should read the book of Revelations, and she sat listening with her whole soul to the gorgeous rhetoric of that wondrous book. "Why don't you

read something you can understand in the Bible?" said I. "O, this is what I want, this tells about God that sits on a great white throne, up in the sky, and He is greater than all the priests, greater than the archbishop, greater than the queen of England; yes," said she, starting up, "greater than the great Pope himself. Now I know why the priests don't want us to read the Bible, but I'll read it as long as I live." There was more philosophy in that poor girl's enthusiasm, than in all the speeches of the learned men last night at Pike's Hall. That poor ignorant Irish girl at one glance saw into the heart of the matter. Put yourself back into the European world of four hundred years ago. The people are locked up in a prison-house, double bolted by the Church and the State. The Church and the State are practically one, sometimes at odds with each other, but always uniting against the people. There is a dim notion abroad that there is a Holy Book which teaches that man is the child of God; that all men are brethren; that the greatest should be the servant of all; that the Almighty Father does justice among the nations, overturns kings, destroys priest-hoods, sweeps wicked nations from the face of the earth; that no being on earth has the right to do as he will unless he does the will of God; that religion does not mean the pope and the cathedrals and the awful ceremonies therein, but love to God and man; that Jesus came to break every yoke, and all who do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, like Him, are sons of the Father in Heaven; that He came to proclaim a glorious liberty throughout the world, to declare peace on earth and good will to men. But the great book that holds all these precious things, is shut up in a dead language that the people can not read, kept by the priesthood under lock and key, and only doled out as it may be perverted to sustain their tyranny. For there was a time when it was not held a "tyrannical" exercise of power to read the Bible to the people. The tyrants have always been the men who would forbid the opening the seals of that great book.

Who wonders that the people of Europe came to regard the Holy Bible as the charter of all their rights, their standard in the great war for freedom? Who wonders that the translation of the Bible by Martin Luther not only broke the chains of German despotism, but created a new language for the people? The people of Holland fought half a century, Germany fought a hundred years for the privilege of reading the Bible. Old England waded through seas of blood to place a Bible in the hands of every Englishman, and the translation of the Bible we now read is not only the grandest monument of our language, but is the triumphal monument of the liberty of the Anglo-Saxon race, inscribed with the names of heroes and martyrs, hung with victors' wreaths, stained with the

blood of the grandest people that ever lived. Think of Old Scotia fighting tyrants out and fighting the Bible in through generations of prayers, and bloody sweat and appalling toil. The men who fled across the ocean to found this new republic, brought the Bible as the "man of their counsel." They read and pondered it till they found death to all the people's foes therein. What wonder that every great man of the Revolution held the Bible close to his heart through all that gloomy strife. When Washington, the first Father of his Country, was inaugurated first President of the United States, he swore the great oath and kissed the Bible in the sight of the reverent multitude. Two years ago, in Louisville, I called upon one of the noblest old women in America, one of the last relics of that grand old Virginia stock from which sprung the men the country can never forget. She led me in silence to a beautiful photograph of our martyr President, the second Father of his Country. It had been sent to her when the proclamation of emancipation was issued, and under it was written: "In grateful memory of the gift of an Oxford Bible, in my youth, from your pious hands. ABRAHAM LINCOLN." So it has been, so it is, so will it be. You may pile up your mountain of new commentaries on the old book till it reaches the skies. Learned pundits may wander off into the shadow land of high German criticism until the fog shuts out the earth and the heavens. Learned lawyers may quibble to-day, as they quibbled three centuries ago, against the legality of reading the book. Solemn priests may demand that the Bible shall be locked up in the cathedral chancel in Cincinnati, as in the days when men went to the stake to testify their love for its words of truth. Atheism may rave against it in Ohio as when in Paris it wrote over the gate of the cemetery: "Death is an eternal sleep." But the American people, who know what this republic means, have received that blood-stained banner, passed onward to them down the generations, across the ocean; have borne it from Plymouth rock to the snows of Alaska, have fought a thousand battles in its name, have broken the chains of a down-trodden race, have proclaimed in every way that men can testify that the Bible is the great charter of their liberties, by which they will abide in the generations to come.

And now comes up a party and demands of the people of this city that they shall pull down this old standard of freedom from the common school, degrade it in the eyes of every child, and throw it away as old rubbish in the garret of the past. Who wants to pull down this banner of civil and religious liberty? The Catholic priesthood wants to pull it down. This subtle and consolidated power in our midst is a unit on this. It is the silent power that stands behind this noisy proclamation against the word of God. Is any body surprised at this? Did the Catholic priesthood ever



in this world raise the flag of civil and religious liberty? Is not every government in Europe to-day holding that priesthood by the throat, at arm's length, and does it not protest against every expansion of the people's rights? Turn to the papal syllabus of 1864, and read the words of the Pope in regard to civil and religious liberty. He says it is an error "that the Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church." He says: "The Catholic religion shall be the only religion of the State *to the exclusion of all others.*" He says: "It is an error that the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and harmonize himself with progress, with liberalism, and with modern civilization." Do you wonder that the Catholic priesthood of Cincinnati and their archbishop, who has gone to Rome to proclaim that Pope infallible, want to tear down this old flag from the roof of the common school? Of course that priesthood is conscientiously opposed to a Bible which teaches the people that they are not the masters, but the servants of mankind. Of course they have conscientious objections to paying taxes to support civil and religious liberty. Did the Catholic priesthood ever find its conscience on the side of the people? Ten years ago, the mass of the clergy and laity of half the Union had a conscientious objection to the American flag. Did we pull down the old stars and stripes to ease that conscience? We lifted the great banner up and held it there, till it was seen by all the people's enemies all over the world. Do we now propose to pull down the old gospel banner to relieve the conscience of a religious caste that has deluged Europe with blood, and burnt it with fire, and fought liberty with all its might for a thousand years? *We intend to hold that banner up because the Catholic priesthood wants to pull it down.*

Of course, the Atheists demand that the Bible shall be put out of the public schools. Every enemy of religion in Cincinnati says "it is tyrannical" to read the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule in the common school. Every man who "don't care" whether religion is up or down, provided he stands firmly on his own feet, is willing the Bible shall be expelled from the republic of the children. And it may be that a few men hope to get into office by trampling the Bible in the dust, and think it a fine thing to ridicule its precepts and make fun of little children at their prayers. I can understand why numbers of our adopted citizens should be estranged, not only from the Bible, but from religion itself. In the European house of bondage from which they fled, they saw the king and the priest in tyrannous league against the people, the school-master a government official, a state ecclesiasticism forced upon the school; the Bible, the church, religion, even Almighty God, perverted to uphold the sinking cause of tyrants. I do not wonder that even men of great gifts and wide culture,

especially if reared in the Catholic church of Europe, should revolt altogether and teach that Atheism and Democracy are synonymous words. I am not surprised that ignorant people are flung off into a blasphemous hatred of religion by the reaction from a bondage like this. We must bear as kindly and as patiently as we can this temporary estrangement, especially of a part of our German adopted population, from religion. Their children will see these things in another way, and will understand that in America God does not mean an earthly king, or Jesus Christ an earthly lord, or religion a State church, or a minister an enemy of the people, or the Bible in the school-room the invasion of any right. They will learn that all these things with us mean the very thing they came here to find, the largest liberty of man; that the temple of American liberty stands firmly buttressed by education, morality, and religion; and that we keep the Bible in the common school, not to play the tyrant over any man, but to keep the children of the republic close to the great standard of "education, morality, and religion" recognized by modern times. We warn them that there is a clique of atheistic demagogues in our western cities, whose principles are as hostile to our American institutions as the theories of the men who lately sought to take our nation's life. We tell them that those men are not safe guides for them or their children; not the men to be put into places of honor and trust in the civil or the educational life of the people. They will inevitably lead their deluded followers into a collision with American civilization that will plant new seeds of bitterness and estrange those who should be one. For it may as well be said now as later, that the people of this country, who were born and educated in this republic, will not submit to the banishment of religion from their civil life; will not expel the Bible from their school and exalt Atheism, under any fine modern name, to be the national school-master; will not see the national day of worship made a day of public disorder and deliberate insult of the nation's faith; will not submit to the atheistic programme of operations in any region of our national life. And if these men can not take warning, and will not understand the deliberate judgment of the American people, they must go on and learn the lesson in the way themselves may choose. They may put out the Bible to-day from the schools of this or that community, but it will come back with thirty millions of people as its body guard. They may silence the children's hymn of praise to God to-day, but the hymn will be taken up by the voice of "a multitude that no man can number," and the people will sing Old Hundred over their political graves. The American people know the Catholic priesthood, and they know the priesthood of atheistic socialism, and they will have neither one nor both of them to bear rule in the common school.

Last evening a meeting was held at Pike's Music Hall, to protest against the reading of the Bible in the common schools of Cincinnati as "illegal and tyrannical." As a demonstration of the people, it was a more significant failure than the one already held at Greenwood Hall. The assembly was not large, and was evidently composed to such an extent of the friends of the book that, if we are to judge by the printed reports, no resolutions were offered, and no vote demanded. But the two most learned and eloquent supporters of the resolutions now before the school board to expel religion were there in full force. Nobody certainly knows the legal strength of the cause better than the accomplished Judge Stallo, and certainly no clerical assailant of the Bible can bring to the work greater learning, or a more peculiar rhetoric, or a more exterminating logic, than the Rev. Mr. Vickers. Of course I can not attempt to follow these gentlemen, step by step, but there are certain aspects of their defense which it may not be improper to notice.

*First.* Both these gentlemen seem to have studiously evaded the entire body of legal and historical argument put forth by the friends of religion in the common school. It has been shown by us that neither the United States nor any State of this Union ever intended to establish a government, or an order of society, which should be hostile, or even indifferent, to unsectarian religion; that while American institutions guard the people, in every way, from the union of Church and State, and the imposition of sectarian religion or ecclesiastical establishments upon them as citizens, they equally provide against public Atheism, by asserting the great central obligation of states and men to worship and obey God, and do good to mankind. This has been shown by the words of the constitution, by the laws and usages of the government, by judicial decisions, and the clear opinions of every eminent statesman of the country, from the creation of the republic to the present day. How is this wall of evidence assailed in these elaborate speeches? It is simply ignored. As far as those speeches were concerned, there might have been no American republic, and no history of the American people. A few sneers and contemptuous flings at the authors of this argument, a little pleasantry at their expense, and a flat assertion that the constitution and government have nothing to do with religion, is the extent of their demonstration in this direction.

In place of the government and order of society established by the American people, these learned gentlemen propose a purely scholastic theory of society, and claim such rights for the individual citizen as would dissolve any government into a German mist. In their ideal republic, the government would ignore religion altogether, through the whole region of public life; indeed, they say government has never touched religion except to damage it. Now, I

shall agree with them that the government does injure religion and oppress the people, when it supports religious or atheistic sects, and enforces sectarian theories upon the people. But it was to provide against this very danger that the people of the United States have established their government and order of society on religion itself, as opposed to sectarianism, or atheism. The American people say, "Religion and morality are essential to good government." If our logical friends can see no difference between this assertion and the assertion of the European idea of a state-established religion, they simply do not understand the practical genius of the American people. In the language of Chief Justice Story, "the attempt, by the framers of the Constitution of the United States, to ignore, or be indifferent to, religion in that instrument, would have been met with universal indignation." Doubtless, there is a sect of political philosophers who believe in a government that lets religion alone, but the American people never joined that sect. The whole conception of such a government as looms through the rhetoric of Pike's Hall is as foreign to our American idea of society as the imperialism of Russia. It is a scholar's dream, well enough for platform emergencies, which disappears at a moment's contact with real American life.

The strongest point in these elaborate discourses is a perpetual and offensive charge of persecution against the people of the United States as respects Catholics and Atheists, especially in the common schools. Now, what are the facts in regard to this matter? The Catholic, or Atheist, is "persecuted" because compelled to pay a tax to support the government of the United States, and the State governments, which secure to all men the greatest amount of liberty yet possessed by any people in the world. The Catholic and Atheist are "oppressed" because that government acknowledges the obligation of states and men to obey God and do good to man, and expresses that obligation by protecting the citizen in the enjoyment of all forms of religion, and making certain public acknowledgment of the dependence of the whole people on Almighty God. Such acknowledgments are public worship, reading of the Bible, and imposition of oaths by the paid servants of the people. The use of the Bible in the schools is simply on this ground. There is more religious acknowledgment in the public schools, because it is most important that the youth of the country should be impressed with their religious obligations as citizens of the State. In private instruction, in the family, in the church, they learn the value of religion in their private, social, and eternal life. By these observances in the school, they are taught those great first truths of religion and morality essential to them as citizens of the State. This, then, is the amount of the "persecution" so ostentatiously and offensively charged against the American people: the enforce-

ment of a tax to support a government, and public institutions, which assert that "religion and morality being essential to good government," some public observance of religion and morality shall be made. Now, this seems to me about the mildest form of persecution yet invented by man; and to conjure out of this the visions of bloodshed and slaughter that shocked the audience at Pike's Hall, seems to me to prove that more than one man in Cincinnati is afflicted with a "gigantic imagination."

To what does this whole style of reasoning conduct us? If correct, one Catholic citizen of the United States, or any State, may demand that all recognition of religion shall be put out of public affairs because there is no other religion than the Catholic, which the State will not adopt. One atheistic father may demand that all acknowledgment of God shall be put out of our common schools because it is an offense to his conscience to pay a tax to a government that acknowledges the truth of religion. And if the nation or the schools decline this modest demand, they are classed among the tyrants and oppressors of the earth, with Nero and Robespierre. What is this but our old Southern friend, the doctrine of State Rights, pushed to its finest point? The nation can do nothing without the consent of the state; the state nothing without the consent of every citizen; the school nothing without the consent of every tax-payer. This whole reasoning lands us in a slough of absurdity and anarchy worthy a professor of German transcendental philosophy, or a French socialistic politician. The new gospel of American rights, as expounded in Pike's Hall, is only John C. Calhoun's doctrine of state rights, run to seed; a demonstration of the impotence of scholastic theories of society when brought in collision with the solid facts of American life.

Both these speakers denounce the Rev. Mr. Mayo in unsparing terms as guilty of criminal misrepresentation of the tendency and purport of Mr. Miller's resolutions now before the School Board. They indignantly deny that it is the intention of such resolutions to banish religion from the schools of Cincinnati, and make a public profession of religious belief in their own case in proof of their assertion. After such public confession, certainly nobody will charge Judge Stallo or the Rev. Mr. Vickers with being an atheist. So far the Rev. Mr. Mayo has made this charge concerning no individual by name. The point of my first lecture was that, under Mr. Miller's resolution, religion in any form of written, spoken or musical expression could not exist in our common schools. Teachers, scholars, and trustees might be religious, but there could be no expression of religion such as I have described, and this utter ignoring of all religion, I asserted, was essential Atheism.

Now, leaving outside the cloud of peculiar rhetoric, in which my assailants have enwrapped their offensive charge of misrepresenta-

tion, I point once more to the resolutions themselves. If words mean anything, those resolutions banish religious instruction, the reading of religious books, the reading of the Bible, and the singing of religious songs, from the school-room. Nothing is said about prayers, but as the only prayer used in our schools is Lord's prayer, which is a part of the Bible, praying goes too; for I believe nobody has accused Mr. Miller of omitting this prohibition in order to change the common school of Cincinnati to a morning prayer-meeting.

Now, when all these things are put out of the school, I respectfully ask these gentlemen how much religion in any outward form of expression will be left? You may say, the practice of religion in the conduct of teachers and scholars. It's constitutional to be religious, but unconstitutional to say anything about it. If you should propose to cut off a man's head, both his arms and both his legs, the poor victim would not get much consolation from your assertion that the heart, the source of life, was left, and that you were the dearest friend of his physical existence. I am inclined to think if all methods of verbal expression of religion were forbidden in the schools, their moral and religious life would bleed to death through these ghastly wounds. Suppose, when the Rev. Mr. Vickers entered his new church, on Plum street (which is, probably, after his confession of faith, not to be dedicated to "that weak decoction of religion called Unitarianism,") suppose his trustees should offer to him, as the decision of his congregation, a resolution, saying, "that religious instruction, reading of religious books including the Holy Bible, and singing of religious hymns were forbidden within its walls," it strikes me the reverend gentleman would conclude that his occupation as a teacher of religion in that house was gone. We are not all gifted with the masterly logical faculty that illuminated Pike's Hall so magnificently, last evening, but the plain people of Cincinnati understand those resolutions to be aimed at any recognition of religion itself in the common school. If gentlemen who support them are indignant at this popular understanding, they can easily remove this misapprehension by withdrawing the resolutions and substituting those of a different style.

But I now take one step farther, and boldly charge that this movement of the School Board is part of a well-understood movement, dating back for some years, to drive religion, in all its forms of verbal expression, out of the schools; made by men who do not regard it a personal offense to be charged with this intention; who are what men in all ages have called materialists and atheists. Every member of the Board of Education, for the last few years, knows of the existence of such men and such intentions in that body, not by inference, but by an observation of the spirit and a weighing of the utterances there made. It has been declared, and that not confidentially, that our public schools would not be perfect until the

name of God could not be mentioned therein. More than a year ago, a prominent member of the Board, and understood supporter of these resolutions, in an address before all the teachers, at their autumnal institute, announced the doctrine that religion and morality should not be taught at all in the schools, save as a special topic of investigation in the highest department. A few months later the Board adopted the phonic system of teaching the children to read. By this system the teaching of reading, spelling, writing, and, to some extent, grammar, in the two lower grades of the district schools, which contain more than a third of our school children, is almost wholly oral in connection with the black-board and the use of objects; a vast improvement on all former systems of instruction. It became necessary to dispense with the two reading books then in use in these grades and to substitute one better adapted to the new system. The gentleman before alluded to, presented to the Committee on Course of Study a new published work, "The Phonic Reader," understood by them to have been compiled by the principal and assistant of a school of which he was the influential trustee. On examination of this book, the Committee on Course of Study and the Superintendent of the schools were startled by certain remarkable omissions. It contains 128 lessons and 112 pages; each lesson being a syllabus suggesting subjects and words for the use of the teacher, with reading lessons for beginners. Almost every topic connected with the purely material life of childhood is introduced, but if there is the slightest recognition of God, of a spirit in man, of the immortal life, of any religious obligation of duty, or even more than the faintest recognition of the social affections and the imagination, it was so disguised that it could not be found after careful search. A child may read that book through, from beginning to end, and never suspect from it that he is different in kind from other animals; has any Creator, or any life beyond the narrowest plane of materialistic existence. As one member of that committee, I called attention to this fact and asked an explanation. Several were given which did not touch the point, but the consideration was urged that the book was only a syllabus, and that every teacher could supplement these lessons with those in which the spiritualities of life would be introduced. This was true; and with such assurance the book was permitted to come in on trial. The teachers have found that it has other deficiencies; that its circle of topics shuts the children up in the dryest enclosure of childhood's life, and have supplemented it with such topics and illustrations outside this region as they had the right to produce.

But now comes in the other half of the programme, in these resolutions, under which no teacher can supplement the Phonic Reader with any illustrations which involve the recognition of religion in any form; and if those resolutions pass, the parents of Cin-

cinnati will probably be interested to know that one-third the children in the schools will be shut up in a reading book which ignores almost every thing outside their animal life. That will do for a beginning. On its heels, of course, in due time will follow a whole series of school-books of the same type. I only half believed at the time that this book was urged upon us with such a view. I now believe it was thus introduced by the presiding spirit of this movement in the Board of Education; and if religion is not altogether rooted out in that body, I shall use my best endeavors to put it out of use in the public schools. Now I assert that here is a fair chain of proof that there is a party in the Board of Education laboring to put all religion out of the schools. It may be that the speakers at Pike's Hall and the mover of these resolutions were ignorant of these facts; but they are thoroughly known to every man who has sat in that circle for the last two years. I may overrate the importance of such facts, but I have made no intentional misrepresentation of anything.

I have charged that the original plan, concocted in private session between certain members of the Board and certain Catholic priests, included the provision that the use of Catholic school-houses rented to the Board should be reserved by the priests two days in the week for religious purposes, while all religious instruction whatever should be excluded from other public schools. I said this was in effect to establish a Catholic mission in the heart of our public school system. To break the force of this charge, one of these speakers point to another provision which forbids religious instruction in all school-houses owned by the Board. This does not touch the point at all. A case just in point now exists in San Francisco. The city has hired a Catholic school-house for a public school. The Catholic priest of the parish persists in holding Catholic religious services for the children on Saturday and Sunday of every week in that, his old school-house. The city has repeatedly ordered him to desist, but he will not budge an inch. That is just what this provision contemplated. The facts are that the Catholic priesthood well knew of an element in the Board opposed to any religion in the schools. They offered a union which, on one hand, banished all religion from the public schools on five days in the week, and gave up a dozen school-houses for two days to them for the Catholic training of the school children, and Mr. Vickers says twenty-six members of the School Board agreed to it. I am glad so many of them are now ashamed of that whole proceeding.

This whole public excitement has not been called into existence by any demand of the people, but precipitated upon the people by a combination of two parties, well known to every man. First, the attempt was made to put out all religion from the schools except the Catholic; that child was still-born. Next came the preemptory



demand in Mr. Miller's resolutions to put out all religion whatever from the public schools. That has become so offensive that its friends are making haste to repudiate their own offspring. Then the assailing column fell back on the proposition to put out only the Bible. A vast majority of the people declare this shall not be done. Now, after abusing and ridiculing every body who has resisted these demands, the Rev. Mr. Vickers offers a compromise, that a manual shall be made, containing the best portions of the Bible; in other words, the passages that are usually read by our teachers shall be gathered into other books or a book and read there; but this on condition that the whole Bible shall first be put out. Gentlemen must pardon my lack of confidence if I prefer to have the whole Bible kept in, and leave our able principals and faithful teachers themselves to make the selections, rather than turn the old book outdoors and then call these gentlemen to preach in such fragments as may be agreeable to themselves. My notion is, that the Board will do better to turn the resolutions outdoors, thereby quieting this public excitement, and leave the common school to go on in the ways of pleasantness and peace.











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